



STEM Activity Centers

Training Starter Template

Objectives: All participants in the training will be able to:

- Identify the purpose and benefits of activity centers
- Plan activity centers
- Consider and address potential challenges

Total Amount of Time: _____

Number of Participants: _____

Preparation: _____

Materials: _____

Training Opening

- Engage Participants _____ minutes
(Ice breaker/warm up activity related to the topic)

- Introduce the Topic _____ minutes
(Motivate participants, show them why the topic is important, share objectives & agenda)

Training Middle _____ minutes

(Explain the topic in detail, demonstrate the concept and discuss it, and practice and apply the topic)

- Explain that activity centers are about engaging children in largely independent activities to support exploration, creativity, confidence, and self-direction. In STEM, they give students opportunities to follow interests, discover new ones, and investigate. Because activity centers are self-directed, with minimal adult supervision, they take time to set up well. In the long run, however, they free staff to circulate, talk with students, and support children and youth choice. Children can also help design, set up, and clean up activity
- Ask participants to discuss potential challenges (e.g., shared space, storage, replenishing materials)



STEM Activity Centers

- Ask which STEM skills and activities lend themselves to activity centers. Explain that activities need to be interesting and motivating to grab and hold children's attention. Emphasize that all activity center ideas need to pass the "why would children do this?" test.
- In pairs, review the Activity Center Planner Tool.
- Select an activity center to plan, and complete the planner. Specify objectives, and describe what children do at the center.
- Share ideas in the full group and discuss from the standpoints of motivation, ease of use, and supervision.
- Choose one activity center to role-play to see where potential challenges might occur and discuss how to address them right from the design and planning stage.

Training Wrap Up and Closing

- Summarize, consolidate _____ minutes
(Connect back to the objectives, check for understanding, and discuss questions)

- Plan Next Steps _____ minutes
(Be specific about application to immediate practice.)

- Closing Comments _____ minutes
(Acknowledge, motivate and inspire)

Post-training assessment and revision

- Formal or informal assessment of effectiveness of training
- Note changes to make
- Note areas for additional training